OPEN Doors

A Publication of the Residential Tenancies Branch *Issue 1, June 2004*

Need information?

ONLINE *www.residentialtenancies.mb.ca*

- Access information about:
  - *The Residential Tenancies Act, The Life Leases Act* and *The Condominium Act*
  - the new *Policies and Procedures Guidebook*
  - your downloadable *Guide for Landlords on Applying for an Above Guideline Rent Increase*
  - frequently used forms including prescribed regulation forms
  - details about the rent status process
  - access to the Orders System

OFFLINE *in person*

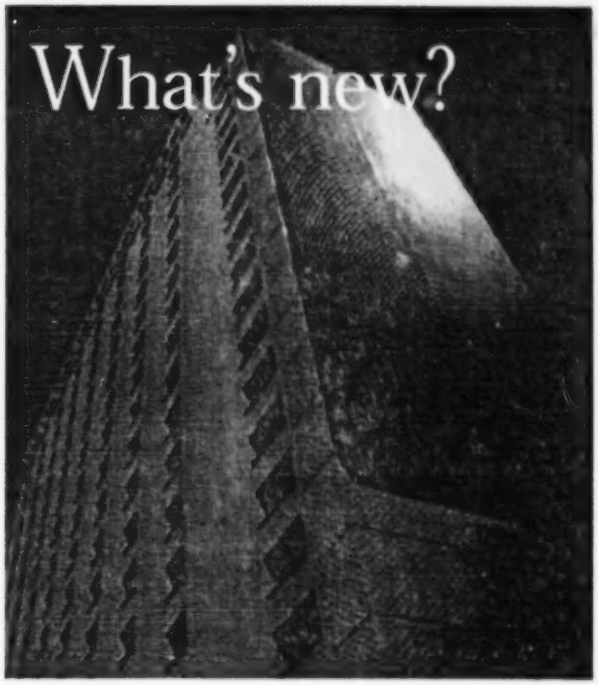
- Visit your branch office Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
  Winnipeg at 302–254 Edmonton Street or call **945-2476**
  Brandon at 114–340 9th Street or call **726-6230**
  Thompson at 113–59 Elizabeth Drive or call **667-6496**
  Toll-free 1-800-782-8403

BY PHONE *24/7*

- Teleservice information is available day or night. Call **945-2476** in Winnipeg or toll-free **1-800-782-8403**.
- Get information about rent increases, security deposits and landlord and tenant responsibilities faxed directly to you. Simply call and follow the prompts.
- You can also use our telephone security deposit interest calculator. A few simple steps and our phone system will calculate the interest for you.

Manitoba
Building for the Future

What's new?



Proposed amendments to *The Residential Tenancies Act, Bill 39,* will clarify existing provisions and streamline operations. The amendments are expected to come into effect later this year. See inside for more information.

The new expanded and updated Policies and Procedures Guidebook is full of information for you. It's available online or at your local Residential Tenancies Branch. See inside for more information.

We're also working on new systems and procedures to increase efficiency and serve you better. Watch for more information coming soon.

Open Doors, our new client information publication is available online, via e-mail or through the post.

If you haven't already subscribed, e-mail us at rtb@gov.mb.ca or call 945-2476 in Winnipeg, or toll-free 1-800-782-8403 and we'll make sure you continue to receive your copy.

Suggestions for future articles or information?
E-mail us at rtb@gov.mb.ca

2008-00379/

Bill 39:

The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Introduced in the Manitoba Legislature on March 11, 2004, these proposed amendments will come into effect on proclaimation expected this fall.

The bill makes several amendments to the act; most are designed to clarify existing provisions and streamline the operations of The Residential Tenancies Branch.

"The amendments add clarity to specific provisions," says Roger Barsy, director of the branch. "For example, it's now specified that a landlord or tenant can give notice of termination of tenancy without a warning letter if there is a health or safety concern."

The amendments clarify a tenant's ability to terminate a tenancy if he or she becomes incapable of living independently. Landlords are also given more authority to dispose of personal property of little or no value that is abandoned by tenants, and the amendments shorten the storage period for items of value. The proposed amendments also specify that municipal taxes and licence fees on mobile homes that are not owned by the landlord are removed from the definition of "rent." The proposed changes mean that tenants will pay the taxes assessed on their individual mobile homes and that they will have the ability to appeal their assessments to municipalities.

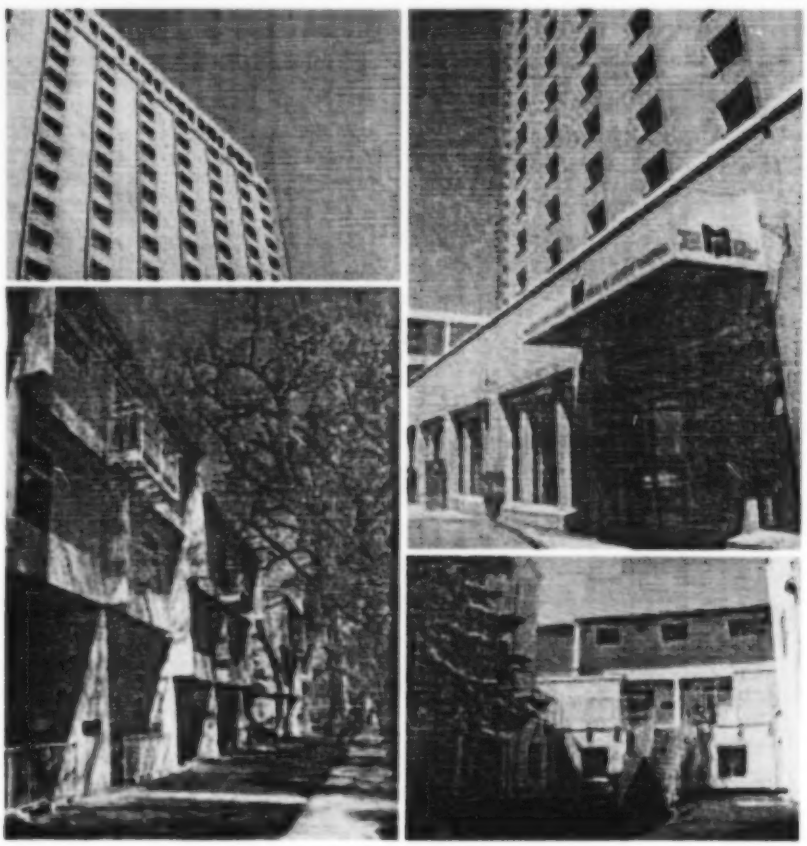
Thinking about buying an apartment building?

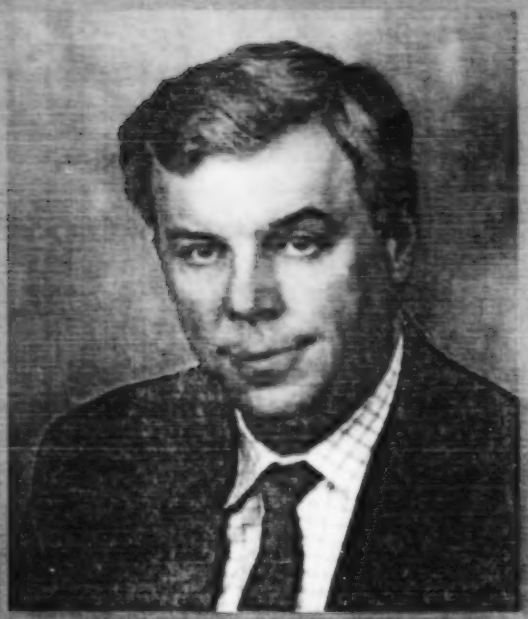
Ask for a rent status report and help avoid unpleasant surprises.

A rent status report can help prospective apartment or residential complex buyers get the information they need to make a sound investment decision.

"Our rent status reports give information about the property, including outstanding repairs and improper rent increases," says director Roger Barsy. "All we need is written authorization from the registered owner of the property and The Residential Tenancies Branch can give prospective buyers the information that is on file."

Rent status request forms are available by calling the branch at 945-2476 in Winnipeg or toll-free at 1-800-782-8403, or online at www.residentialtenancies.mb.ca. A report for complexes of four or fewer units is $150; a report for complexes of more than four units is $300.





A message from Greg Selinger, the Minister of Finance, Minister responsible for The Residential Tenancies Branch

Welcome to the first edition of *OpenDoors*, a publication of The Residential Tenancies Branch.

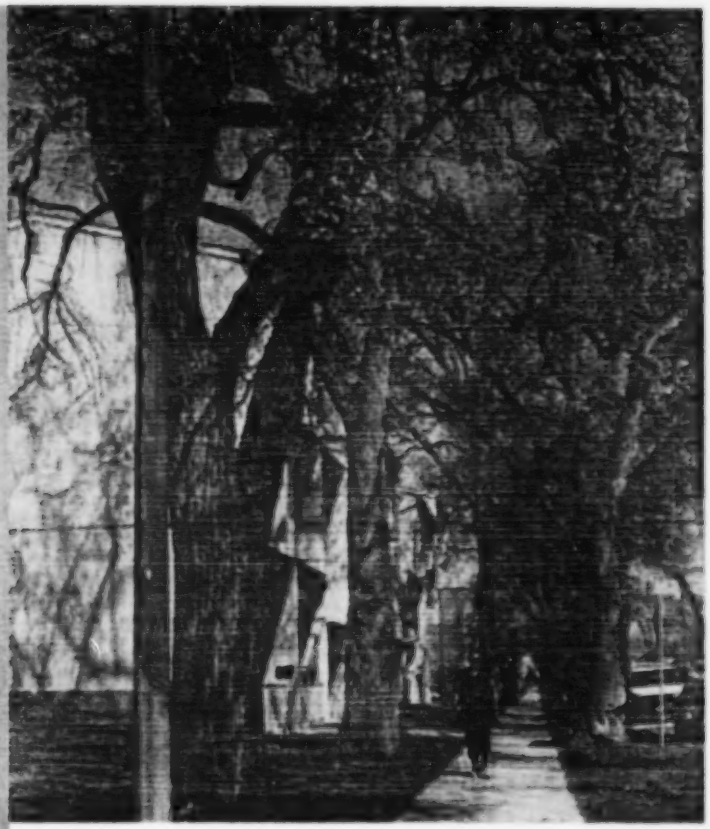
This newsletter is part of the branch's work to provide more information to landlords and tenants. It will be used to convey important information about policies, procedures and proposed or amended legislation.

I especially encourage you to read the articles on proposed changes to *The Residential Tenancies Act*, and the new guidebook. *Bill 39, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act*, was introduced in the Legislature last March. The amendments are expected to be proclaimed into law this fall. The guidebook includes new information about notices of termination and orders of possession, as well as information about rent regulation and repairs. It has been expanded and updated with more information about processes and policies.

Look for it online at www.residentialtenancies.mb.ca or view a copy at your local branch.

Greg Selinger

GREG SELINGER,
Minister of Finance



Security Deposits

Unclaimed security deposits should be returned to the RTB

When a tenancy ends, landlords are required to return security deposits to the tenants within 14 days. If a landlord has a claim against the deposit, it must be sent to the tenant within 28 days. Under *The Residential Tenancies Act*, unclaimed deposits must be sent to the branch.

After the branch has held the unclaimed security deposits for two years, they can be used to provide education programs and materials to landlords and tenants.

If tenants do not receive their deposit refund and there is no likelihood of it being returned by the landlord, the branch has the authority to use funds from unclaimed security deposits.

"Unclaimed security deposits are transferred to the Security Deposit Compensation Fund and used to pay a tenant when, because of extraordinary circumstances such as bankruptcy, a landlord doesn't obey an order," says Roger Barsy, branch director. "Other money from unclaimed security deposits is put to good use to provide materials and client information that we might not otherwise be able to provide to landlords and tenants."

New guidebook

The Policies and Procedures Guidebook

A new, expanded and improved guidebook is now available. The guidebook includes 13 different sections with information for both landlords and tenants. The new edition uses plain language to provide thorough, accurate and timely information about a variety of important topics including:

- **landlord and tenant responsibilities**
- **claims for compensation**
- **hearings**
- **mediation**
- **notices of termination and orders of possession**
- **rent regulation**
- **repairs**
- **tenancy agreements**
- **security deposits**
- **standards for rehabilitation**

There are links to *The Residential Tenancies Act* and its regulations as well as convenient links between sections.
Visit www.residentialtenancies.mb.ca

The guidebook is also available in French and for your reference at your local branch.